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General and complete disarmament: consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 51/45 N of 10 December 1996, the General Assembly stressed the importance of measures such as the collection, control and disposal of arms, especially small arms and light weapons, coupled with restraint over the production, procurement and transfer of such arms, the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, demining and conversion, for the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in areas that have suffered from conflict; underlined the role of the United Nations in providing a political framework for such practical disarmament measures in those areas and in facilitating their implementation; requested the Secretary-General, in the light of experience gained from conflict resolution, to make recommendations and suggestions for an integrated approach to such practical disarmament measures, taking also into account the work of the United Nations expert panel on small arms, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session; also requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the subject and to include them in his report; called upon Member States, as well as regional arrangements or agencies, to assist the Secretary-General in his endeavours and to contribute actively to the implementation of such practical disarmament measures; and encouraged United Nations organs and agencies to join in that task within the framework of their responsibilities, in particular the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on the basis of its Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project.

2. The present report is submitted in accordance with the request contained in paragraph 3 of that resolution.

II. Further developments

3. Since the adoption of resolution 51/45 N, a number of developments have taken place in the consideration of the subject. Of particular importance are the discussions that took place during the 1997 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission within the framework of its Working Group examining guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N. The discussions covered both a more comprehensive and integrated approach to disarmament and specific proposals for practical measures. A commonly shared concern among the various proposals considered by the Disarmament Commission was to reduce human suffering caused by the actual use of weapons by giving attention to measures that prevent armed conflicts from reemerging through a consolidation of the peace process. The scope and framework for future guidelines is

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provided in the Disarmament Commission Chairman's paper of 9 May 1997 (A/CN.10/1997/CRP.5, annex).

4. A working paper submitted by Germany and other sponsors of resolution 51/45 N (A/CN.10/194) concentrates on problem areas where practical disarmament measures can have an immediate impact. Proposals for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants receive much attention, as do those for weapons buy-back programmes, curbs on illicit arms trade and greater donor country involvement in parallel progress on security and development among regions most affected by problem areas in conventional disarmament. A working paper submitted by China suggests principles and ways and means. Specific proposals on conventional arms control and limitations are made in the working paper by Pakistan. South Africa submitted a working paper on an approach that would address conventional arms build-up beyond legitimate purposes of self-defence as well as curtail proliferation and illicit trafficking. Lessons learned from the European conventional arms control negotiations are highlighted in a working paper by the United States of America. Detailed recommendations on regional approaches, confidence-building and capacity-building are made in a working paper submitted by Canada.

5. Issues of relevance to practical disarmament measures were discussed by the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/70 B of 12 December 1995. Its report makes recommendations of a practical nature to reduce excessive and destabilizing accumulations of small arms and light weapons already in circulation in regions that have experienced violent conflicts fought mostly with those weapons. It also makes practical proposals for monitoring and controlling excessive accumulation and proliferation of small weapons in the future, particularly through illicit and covert arms traffic. The report includes in its annexes the outcome of its inter-sessional work. The joint appeals, calls and statements in its annexes contain situation-specific proposals particularly suited to some of the subregions severely affected by recent armed conflicts. The Secretary-General expresses the hope that the proposals made in the report will be followed up by appropriate action at the national, regional and international levels.

6. The present report draws the General Assembly's attention to the useful work in this area being carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) under its disarmament and conflict resolution project. The focus of the UNIDIR study series on the management of arms in peace processes is on field experiences of United Nations peacekeeping and other peace missions in Cambodia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, Liberia, Mozambique, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Somalia. Under the same project, UNIDIR has also prepared an empirical study on small arms management and peacekeeping in Southern Africa. In its studies under the disarmament and conflict resolution project entitled "Managing arms in peace processes: the issues" and "Managing arms in peace processes: aspects of psychological operations and intelligence", UNIDIR has analysed various substantive issues related to the linkages between the management of arms during peace processes and the settlement of conflict.

7. The Institute's findings may be relevant in the continuing discussions on the contribution of practical disarmament measures to the consolidation of peace.

III. Observations and recommendations

8. As pointed out in my report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", disarmament is a central issue on the global agenda (A/51/950, para. 122). The emergence of new dangers and actors has added to the urgency of the tasks that the United Nations is called upon to perform in the area of disarmament. With nations everywhere recognizing their stakes in monitoring weapons-related developments, the United Nations has taken centre stage in worldwide efforts to limit both weapons and conflict.

9. To respond effectively to the priorities of Member States in the disarmament area, I am undertaking a managerial reorganization of the Secretariat's capacities. With the establishment of a new Department for Disarmament Affairs and Arms Regulation, a structure will be in place to carry out the United Nations mission and mandate in this vital field of the Organization's responsibilities.

10. The adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N is a significant confirmation of the international community's readiness to address the increasingly serious issue of practical disarmament in the context of the conflicts the United Nations is dealing with and of the weapons, most of them small arms and light weapons, that are killing large numbers of people and causing massive destruction and human suffering in many parts of the world.

11. In the light of experience gained by the United Nations through efforts at conflict resolution, consideration should be given to incremental steps leading to a more integrated

approach to practical disarmament measures, particularly in post-conflict situations. Among such steps, there is a clear need:

(a) To include weapons-related issues as an integral part of peace accords where the United Nations is involved in bringing an end to armed conflicts and in consolidating the peace process to prevent their reemergence. An illustrative sample of such issues would be retrieval, storage and safeguarding of weapons belonging to demobilized personnel, destruction of ammunition and weapons buy-back programmes;

(b) To promote an exchange of national and subregional experiences in the collection, control and disposal of arms, especially small arms and light weapons, and the reintegration of former combatants into civil society at the end of armed conflicts;

(c) To encourage harmonization of national legislation to monitor transboundary traffic on illicit arms and the pooling together of information about acts of criminality across national frontiers;

(d) To generate a better public understanding of practical disarmament measures intended to maintain and consolidate peace and security in areas that have suffered from armed conflicts through the collection and dissemination of information about the direct and indirect consequences of excessive accumulation, proliferation and use of weapons, including light weapons;

(e) To encourage greater transparency in military matters and seek wider adherence to tools of confidence-building, such as periodical reporting of military expenditures and establishment of registers for specific categories of conventional armaments.

12. Effective implementation of practical disarmament measures will greatly benefit from the international community's readiness to assist the affected States in their efforts to consolidate peace. I would wish to see the establishment of a group of interested States to facilitate this process and to build upon the momentum generated.

13. The replies received in response to paragraph 4 of resolution 51/45 N are reproduced in section IV below. Further replies from Member States will be issued as addenda to the present report.

IV. Information received from Governments

Canada

[6 August 1997]

1. Paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", requests the Secretary-General, in the light of experience gained from conflict resolution, to make recommendations and suggestions for an integrated approach to such practical disarmament measures, taking also into account the work of the United Nations expert panel on small arms, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-second session. Paragraph 4 requests the Secretary-General, in that connection, to seek the views of Member States on the subject and to include them in his report.

2. In response to the request in paragraph 4, Canada is pleased to provide its views on this important subject. This submission will briefly highlight the nature of the problem and why Canada sees it as an important one, as well as summarize key recommendations from a background paper prepared by Canada on this subject.

3. Canada shares the view articulated in 1995 by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali that there is an urgent need for practical disarmament in the context of the conflicts with which the United Nations is actually dealing and with the weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, that are actually killing thousands of people each year. This is an important subject that has received relatively little attention until recent years.

4. Two recent initiatives by the United Nations bear special mention in this context. The first is the establishment by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/70 B of a United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. This Panel, which concluded its deliberations on 18 July and is to report to the Assembly at its fifty-second session, has examined the types of small arms and light weapons used in conflicts with which the United Nations deals, the nature and causes of excessive and destabilizing accumulations and transfers of such weapons and the ways in which such excessive and destabilizing accumulations and transfers can be prevented and reduced. The Panel constitutes an important opportunity to explore those issues and to determine a set of practical measures to address those concerns.

5. The second initiative is the work begun by the Disarmament Commission at its 1997 session on guidelines

on conventional arms control/limitations and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N. The resolution in question, and the one to which this submission responds, stresses the particular importance of certain practical disarmament measures for the maintenance and consolidation of peace in areas that have suffered conflict. Following from this, the aim of the Disarmament Commission exercise is to develop guidelines for a comprehensive approach to the development and implementation of such practical measures.

6. Canada is a strong supporter of both of those initiatives. In addition, Canada is working closely with many other countries in pursuing efforts to achieve a global ban on anti-personnel landmines, an arms control undertaking which would help address a key obstacle to successful peace-building in a number of post-conflict situations.

7. Recent experience demonstrates that it is critical, particularly to the success of peace-building in post-conflict environments, to address the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the former combatants. Effective programmes in this regard have several benefits:

(a) They reduce the chances of renewed hostilities at the same level of violence and destruction;

(b) They help preclude the use in criminal activities of leftover military-style weapons and the social and economic disruption that can flow from such activities;

(c) They provide the basis for the re-establishment of confidence in social institutions, such as the judicial system and police, as well as a secure environment for normal peaceful interaction;

(d) They can provide for the removal of mines and explosive ordnance, which can reopen territory for peaceful use.

8. In order to facilitate discussion of the subject of consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures at the 1997 session of the Disarmament Commission, Canada prepared and distributed a background report entitled "Practical disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures for peace-building", as well as tabled a working paper containing the principal findings and recommendations from the background paper (A/CN.10/1997/WG.III/WP.1). That background paper contains a detailed set of recommendations for action at the international, regional and national levels.

9. Canada strongly supports an integrated approach with respect to the design and implementation of the practical disarmament measures within a peace-building process. The background paper recommends an integrated approach by United Nations agencies to security and development challenges and a leadership role by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank to help promote such an approach among the international donor community. It is Canada's understanding that this emphasis is echoed by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms in one of its recommendations, which calls for the United Nations to extend the proportional and integrated approach to security and development initiated with respect to Mali and other West African States to other regions suffering from the aftermath of conflict and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Canada understands as well that the Panel also recommends that the United Nations support, with the assistance of the donor community, all appropriate post-conflict initiatives related to disarmament and demobilization. Further, the recommendations of the Panel also appear to place considerable emphasis on the importance of the disarmament aspects of peacekeeping operations and include a suggestion to develop guidelines for both the negotiation and implementation phases of the disarmament mandate.

10. In its background paper, Canada demonstrates, through a series of case studies of United Nations peace and security operations, that the substantial completion of the disarmament component of a peacekeeping mandate is fundamental to the longer term stability of the country or region in question. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are politically, institutionally and logistically complex and sensitive operations, which demand considerable financial, human, technical and organizational capacity. Expertise and support from the international community are essential in order to plan, coordinate and implement effectively such programmes. In addition to expertise and support relating to the political, diplomatic and military aspects of designing and negotiating a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, financial and developmental assistance from the international donor community, humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations have proven equally essential. Ensuring that the parties themselves are fully involved in the planning and implementation phases and that every effort is made to reinforce local capacities and expertise are other lessons learned from recent United Nations peace-support operations.

11. Based on its review of the cases, Canada in its background paper describes essential conditions for a successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, identifies possible obstacles and constraints and

recommends the use of a generic model for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the context of peace-building. The outline of one such model is contained in the background paper itself. Among other recommendations contained in the background paper are the following:

(a) Continued support for and promotion of regional approaches on confidence-building and transparency in military matters;

(b) Renewed focus on regional arms registers including small arms and light weapons as well as on standardized reporting mechanisms for military budgets;

(c) Promotion of a multilateral dialogue at the global level with the aim of broadening the acceptance and coverage of arms export, disarmament and transfer arrangements, especially in the area of small arms and light weapons;

(d) Promotion by the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations of regional and subregional dialogue to heighten awareness of and facilitate cooperation in relation to small arms controls, including the possibility of cross-regional meetings to share experiences;

(e) Promotion of exchanges between United Nations bodies studying various aspects of small arms/firearms control;

(f) Promotion of discussion in all appropriate forums between suppliers and recipients of conventional armaments, particularly in relation to small arms and light weapons transfers;

(g) When preparing for the negotiation of a peace agreement in a peace-building context:

(i) Involve the United Nations (or representatives of the appropriate international implementing body) early;

(ii) Involve technical advisers on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration dimensions;

(iii) Develop generic guidelines or "protocols" as well as standard operating procedures for the implementation of the disarmament aspects of peace plans, supported by appropriate databases;

(iv) Develop a generic disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme model as a guide for negotiation, implementation and training, which should include an integrated technical mission as early as possible in the negotiation process, a strong programme of public information, agreed procedures for weapons collection and destruction, carefully planned incentive programmes, the public destruction of weapons collected and integrated planning and implementation within the overall peace-building process, covering the continuum of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration aspects;

(h) Incorporation into national peacekeeping training programmes of a component dealing with the cooperation/coordination aspects among all partners (military, police, humanitarian, human rights, finance and development) in modern peacekeeping operations;

(i) Sponsorship by the UNDP/World Bank of joint meetings of the security and development communities on issues of adequate financing in connection with the aspects of peace-building related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes;

(j) Continued implementation of the rapidly deployable headquarters concept.

12. Canada believes that a productive debate ensued in the Disarmament Commission in this the first year of its three-year consideration of the consolidation of peace item. Seven working papers were submitted, and a well-developed Chairman's paper was forwarded "with general agreement" to the Commission at its 1998 session.

13. It is Canada's view that the experience of the United Nations in modern peace-support operations has overwhelmingly demonstrated the need for an integrated approach by the international community in general and the United Nations in particular in order to respond effectively to complex emergencies. Multifaceted mandates require a multidisciplinary approach and an ability to coordinate effectively a range of military and civilian actors. And this need for such an integrated approach does not end with the peacekeeping phase of the mission, but is equally important in follow-on peace-building efforts intended to consolidate the peace.

14. The development of the "framework for coordination" and the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs represent two concrete examples of the effort by the United Nations to better coordinate its own departments and the specialized agencies to the extent possible. The proposals tabled by the Secretary-General in the General Assembly on 16 July 1997 represent a further bold attempt to achieve better coordination of the United Nations system as a whole. His report points out that "present-day conflicts have many dimensions that must be addressed comprehensively and

require more integrated and coordinated action" (A/51/950, para. 117). The practical disarmament dimension of the "concurrent and integrated actions undertaken at the end of a conflict to consolidate peace and prevent a recurrence of armed confrontation" (para. 120), in Canada's view, requires greater and more systematic attention.

15. Regrettably, however, this need for such an integrated approach has yet to be fully embraced in the context of the various disarmament forums of the United Nations. In this regard, it is interesting to note that, as a rule, those delegations that have been either the practitioners or the recipients of practical disarmament measures in post-conflict peace-building situations are also those who most strongly agree that an integrated approach, drawing on all relevant expertise along the disarmament and development continuum, is what is urgently required.

16. Canada believes that the United Nations has accumulated unparalleled expertise over the years regarding the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures, including on issues relating to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the aftermath of conflict. This is amply demonstrated by the case studies reviewed in the Canadian background paper. It is both appropriate and necessary, therefore, that the United Nations seize the opportunity to provide leadership and purpose to the growing international effort in this area. To this end, Canada sincerely hopes that the views contained in the present submission, together with the detailed findings and recommendations contained in the background paper, will assist in this important task.

European Union

[2 July 1997]

1. The members of the European Union have supported the consensus on General Assembly resolution 51/45 N entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures". We wish to provide the following common reply[1] to paragraph 4 offering elements for the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session in which the Secretary-General is requested, in the light of experience gained from conflict resolution, to make recommendations and suggestions for an integrated approach to practical disarmament measures. The European Union recognizes that important work on the issue has been and is being pursued in other forums, and we believe this work should also be taken into account.

A. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants

2. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants have to be seen in the wider political framework of conflict resolution and will, in a post-conflict environment, succeed only in a climate of mutual confidence. Efforts to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate combatants should therefore be integrated into a larger comprehensive strategic framework for internationally supported post-conflict recovery worked out in close collaboration between the parties themselves, international organizations and donor Governments. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants will, in the process of post-conflict peace-building, also contribute to preventing conflicts from reemerging and new conflicts from erupting. Demobilization and demilitarization are key elements in preventing violent behaviour and criminality from spreading in a fragile post-conflict society.

3. A sound peace agreement that is generally accepted by the parties as a fair and just compromise respecting basic human (political and economic) rights is the best basis for subsequent efforts to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate combatants. Such measures can be most effectively pursued if they are explicitly agreed upon, since consent of the parties is essential to the effective implementation of those measures. To the extent possible, special provisions for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and creation of new unified armed security forces (integrating the opposition forces) should therefore be agreed upon in the course of negotiations leading to a formal peace agreement and should be explicitly spelled out in the peace agreement. This serves to clarify the responsibilities of the parties and the conditions for the demobilization and thus facilitates further demilitarization of the society. Such provisions should include precise prescriptions for the collection, dismantlement and disposal of excess arms not needed for national security forces and for the overall size and composition of the new unified armed forces once the peace settlement is implemented. It is of equal importance to include, where possible, appropriate references in the respective mandates of peacekeeping operations and to

[1] The Netherlands, on behalf of the European Union as well as the following associated countries, have aligned themselves with this reply: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Iceland and Norway have also aligned themselves with this reply.

foresee explicit provisions for the transition to the post-conflict phase.

4. Lasting success in disarmament and demobilization depends on the extent to which former warring parties and individuals believe that their physical and economic security is maintained even after relinquishing their arms and abandoning what for many was not just an activity but also a way of life. This requires the establishment of a minimum of police authority.

5. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are interrelated. Demobilization is possible only when there is at least a certain degree of disarmament. Similarly, the success of demobilization efforts is contingent upon the effective rehabilitation of former combatants and their integration into civilian life or the restructured army.

6. During the consolidation phase, a period of cantonment is necessary to deter the disarmed combatants from returning to their respective warring parties and to facilitate the process of reintegration. The duration of cantonment should be specified in the peace agreement.

7. The entire process, from disarmament to the social and economic reintegration of ex-fighters, has to be planned and prepared well in advance. Early planning must include definition of the respective roles and mandates of the different humanitarian and peacekeeping actors involved at each stage and agreement on sources of funding for the different stages of the process. The resource requirements should be specified from the outset in order to allow for efficient resource mobilization from internal and external sources. Early involvement of the international financial institutions should be sought for the demobilization and reintegration phases of the process. Without this level of planning and preparation, delays in disarmament and demobilization may cause armies to disintegrate in an unplanned manner, and delays in reintegration programmes may cause ex-soldiers to resort to banditry, both of which, among other things, lead to new problems of armaments control.

8. Above all, the security of the assembly areas must be ensured. In addition, appropriate infrastructure and provisions (e.g., health care, nutrition and housing) for former combatants should be in place for a determinate period during the consolidation phase. Division of roles and responsibilities between internal and external actors must be clear. The international community should be prepared to assist.

9. Transparency of the arms collection process is vital. Storage sites should preferably be guarded by an external military presence on a mandatory basis.

10. Requirements for new security forces should be precisely defined. All other weapons should be declared to be in excess and destroyed, preferably in public and as expeditiously as possible. Strict controls should be provided for at all stages in the peace process to ensure that the commitments given by the parties with respect to disarmament are abided by.

11. United Nations missions should be equipped with sufficient standard mobile equipment for small arms destruction. Such equipment is low-cost and should be regularly introduced into theatre operations at an early stage.

12. Reintegration efforts have been most successful where they have been community-based and have involved demobilized combatants directly in the planning and implementation of programmes.

13. Professional opportunities (e.g., training and occupational opportunities) have to be created for demobilized soldiers so that they do not return to their armies or take up banditry. Equally important are special measures directed at the psychosocial rehabilitation of the former combatants and the reintegration of vulnerable groups such as child soldiers and the disabled. Efforts aimed at reconciliation, including truth commissions and amnesties, are a precondition for peaceful coexistence. In the end, however, long-term success will depend on the economic and political rehabilitation of the country as a whole.

14. An effective independent public information campaign is needed to ensure that combatants and civilians have confidence in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and in the peace process in general.

B. Demining

15. Demining is often one of the most critical challenges in post-conflict environments. The tremendous humanitarian problem caused by mines and other unexploded devices can have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-infested countries and constitutes an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions.

16. Provisions for demining should be, where necessary and appropriate, an explicit element and an integral part of peacekeeping mandates.

17. Comprehensive demining is, however, a long-term venture, and demining activities should focus on reducing risks to civilians and on the creation and strengthening of local demining capabilities and mine awareness programmes. Except for humanitarian situations, where demining is undertaken for the direct benefit of vulnerable communities or for obtaining access for relief operations, support for mine clearance should be provided to countries whose authorities cease further use of anti-personnel landmines and take steps to cease the trade, manufacture and stockpiling of the weapons.

18. The international community, with the States involved in the deployment of mines having particular responsibility, can play an important role in assisting mine clearance in affected countries through the provision of necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance to remove or otherwise render ineffective existing mines, booby traps and other devices.

19. Wherever possible and appropriate, mechanical mine-clearance systems, other methods based on new technology and dogs, which help to make demining faster, safer and most cost-effective, should be applied.

20. In the context of United Nations demining activities, coordination and a clear delineation of responsibilities between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Demining Unit and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs Mine Clearance and Policy Unit should be further improved so as to avoid duplication of efforts and to guarantee a coherent and integrated approach towards the whole range of short- and long-term demining needs. Coordination efforts should be guided by General Assembly resolution 51/149 of 13 December 1996 on assistance in mine clearance, which emphasizes the lead responsibility of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

C. Further stabilizing and confidence-building measures to consolidate peace and security

21. In addition to demobilizing and reintegrating combatants and demining, post-conflict consolidation of peace must address the excessive and potentially destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons typically found in countries after conflicts. The nature of the interventions will vary according to the specific context, but the measures outlined below, among others, may be considered in the interest of consolidating national security, preventing further regional proliferation and combating illicit arms trafficking (understood to cover international trade in conventional arms that is contrary to the law of States and/or international law), thereby contributing to conflict prevention in the process of post-conflict peace-building.

National: Collection and control of weapons

22. Weapon turn-in programmes, also known as buy-back programmes, have sometimes proved useful where all factions are committed to the peace process and effective measures have been taken to restore public security. They may be appropriate to some future operations, but their likely impact needs to be considered carefully.

23. Incentive programmes should also be created for combatants and civilians to indicate weapons and munitions caches and storage sites.

24. Strategies for effective weapons seizure programmes resulting in a decline in armed violence should be further developed. This requires both a cooperative attitude to create trust and confidence among the parties and the capability to proceed against reticent subordinate units, irregular forces and organized banditry to ensure that weapon seizure missions can be completed successfully and without violent clashes.

25. States should ensure that they have an adequate system of national laws and/or regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over armaments and the export and import of arms in order, among other goals, to prevent illicit arms trafficking. States emerging from conflict should thus, as soon as practicable, impose licensing requirements for all weapons holdings.

26. States should train adequate numbers of security forces for the effective implementation and enforcement of their arms and export-control policies, who must exercise their duties with full respect for human rights. In this context the elaboration of a national code of conduct for security forces might be appropriate.

National: Conversion

27. Military resources (including respective production facilities) exceeding legitimate security requirements should be converted to civilian use, if possible, or destroyed.

Regional: Control of weapons

28. States receiving arms have a responsibility to seek to ensure that the quantity and the level of sophistication of their arms imports are commensurate with their legitimate self-defence and security requirements and that they do not contribute to instability and conflict in their regions or in other countries and regions or to illicit trafficking in arms.

29. In general, arms-producing or supplier States have a responsibility to seek to ensure that the quantity and level of sophistication of exported arms do not contribute to instability and conflict in their regions or in other countries and regions or to illicit trafficking in arms. They have a particular responsibility to ensure that arms transfers to countries in the state of peace consolidation correspond strictly with the stipulations in the respective peace agreement and with the policy of the State concerned.

30. States in the neighbourhood of a State in the course of peace consolidation should, as appropriate, cooperate closely, sharing customs and intelligence information on the storage and movement of arms. They should consider coordinated and enforced border controls in order to prevent illicit arms trafficking into and out of the country concerned. They should also set up joint programmes for the destruction of excess weaponry intercepted in this activity.

31. States should intensify international cooperation in the relevant field of criminal law. They should assist each other in the development and enforcement of effective national controls, with a view to curbing the evasion of justice by illicit arms traffickers.

Regional: Arms registers, arms control

32. As a confidence-building measure, States could be encouraged to create regional arms registers, complementing the existing United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, focusing on weapons of particular concern in the region.

33. States should strive for regional arms control and confidence-building agreements aimed at the prevention and reduction of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of weapons.

Global: Control of weapons

34. The United Nations has an important role to play in the field of international arms transfers and the eradication of illicit arms trafficking in accordance with its overall purposes and principles. The cooperation of the international community, however, is essential for the United Nations to be successful in those endeavours.

35. The United Nations should follow up the arms control process during peace consolidation and where possible assist the State concerned in its efforts to promote the process of controlling, collecting and destroying small arms, light weapons and related ammunition.